

SWT Executive - 20 January 2021

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees, Peter Pilkington, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and Sarah Wakefield

Officers: James Hassett, Dawn Adey, Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Paul Fitzgerald, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Amy Tregellas, Mickey Green, Stuart Noyce, Lisa Redston, Mark Wathen and Dan Webb

Also Present: Councillors John Hassall, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Andrew Sully, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

82. Apologies

No apologies were received.

83. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 December 2020 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 16 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

84. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford	Personal	Spoke

		Arundel		
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

85. **Public Participation**

Councillor Gwil Wren made the following statement:-

The Scrutiny Committee asked the Executive to consider the huge impact of the current phosphate related planning restrictions on our SMEs. The Committee requested that, to give certainty and reassurance to our local construction industry, the Council, whilst working with officers, partner councils, consultants and statutory undertakers, expedite short term mitigation measures to allow planning applications to proceed before providing permanent solutions for phosphate treatment and removal from our rivers, watercourses and wetlands.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation gave the following response:-

Thank you for your question, as you know the Council takes very seriously the magnitude of the phosphates issue. With that in mind our officers moved quickly to commission a phosphates calculator which allowed us to understand phosphate levels associated with affected development and crucially the level of compensation required to off-set. The calculator was expected to be launched publicly by the end of January.

The calculator would not make the challenge of phosphates go away but it was nonetheless an important step. Attention was now turning to what and how solutions could be put in-place in the short term, particularly for those schemes/applicants that would be unable to compensate for phosphates directly through their own schemes. The challenge to SMEs was well understood and a real concern.

There were of course other elements to the Council's response on phosphates as you know; those included lobbying government to raise awareness of the problem, our on-going communications on the matter with applicants both directly and through our website. We have also recently sought counsel advice on a

number of matters relating to the phosphates issue, advice which we anticipated sharing publicly very soon through our website.

86. **Executive Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Executive Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

Resolved that the Executive Forward Plan be noted.

87. **Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan 2021-2026**

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- Councillors were pleased to see that 98% of plastic was retained and recycled in the United Kingdom.
- Councillors queried whether the carrier bags used to dispose of batteries in the recycling collection, would be returned, especially as residents had been encouraged not to use single use plastic.
The Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) advised that the carrier bags would be returned so that the customers could reuse them for future collections.
- Councillors queried how durable the new blue recycling bags were.
The Managing Director of the SWP was unsure of how long the blue bag would last, however, he had received positive feedback from the other areas that had been using the blue bags.
- Councillors queried why the area of Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) had been split into the former Taunton Deane and West Somerset areas for the rollout of Recycle More.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that they had split the area of SWT into two to make the rollout more manageable and explained that the two areas worked out of different depots which also needed to be updated in phases to be able to deliver the rollout of Recycle More.
- Councillors queried how the scheme would be communicated to disabled residents.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that all literature was available in braille and many different languages. The SWP had also introduced a talking café to ensure community engagement with as many groups as possible.
- Councillors queried how much of waste was transferred to energy.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that the majority of the waste placed at kerbside was transferred to energy and approximately two thirds of the waste taken to the household waste recycling centres.
- Councillors requested further information on how the SWP would achieve decarbonising of operations.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised there were many measures that were due to be implemented: trials of electric fleet vehicles; use of

alternative fuels; green infrastructure; and optimising round designs, to name but a few.

- Councillors queried how would the SWP enforce and support residents to recycle properly.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that the recycling crews would tag the containers to educate the residents on what they should be placing in which container, as that had proved successful in the past. If there was a persistent lack of proper recycling, then the residents would be contacted to discuss the different options available to assist them.
- Councillors queried how the SWP would engage with residents who lived in flats, who did not have the space for all the recycling containers.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that improved rollout would be done for communal bins but that it would depend on the individual properties.
- Concern was raised on the Walford Cross site and what was being done to reassure staff that worked at the site.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that a press release had been distributed and assured councillors that extra measures had been put in place to support staff and that those measures were under constant review.
- Concern was raised on waste being blown across the roads.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that the use of the new blue recycling bag should prevent the lightweight objects from being blown into the roads.
- Councillors queried where Somerset was in the recycling league table.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that Somerset was in the top 20% on weight based recycling and the top 10% in carbon saving.
- Councillors queried whether there would be a move back to textile recycling.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that they currently collected wearable textiles at kerbside but that it was not likely to change to other textiles in the near future.
- Councillors queried 'what's next'?
The Managing Director of the SWP agreed that there was still lots more that they could achieve and would need to challenge themselves in the future and look at resource efficiency amongst other areas.
- Concern was raised on issues that residents had experienced with the clinical waste collections when the data had been transferred onto a new operating system.
The Managing Director of the SWP advised that he was aware that there had been issues, but that they should have been fixed by now. So requested councillors to contact the SWP if they were aware of any other residents still having issues with their collections.
- Concern was raised for those residents who had nappies and incontinence pads as part of their rubbish and that they would have to store that waste for the three weekly collections.
The Managing Director of the SWP understood their concern and explained that sixteen other authorities had already changed over to the three weekly collections and that they had used a stepped approach to the

rollout. He also advised that the SWP could provide additional bins to those residents who required extra capacity due to that type of waste.

- Councillors queried what plastic would be collected as currently it was only plastic bottles.

The Managing Director of the SWP advised that explaining which plastic could be recycled was tricky with many containers being made up of different materials. So the SWP planned to make it simple and describe the types of plastic containers that would be collected.

- Councillors queried whether the blue recycling bag would be folded and placed back in one of the recycling boxes to prevent them from blowing away on collection days.

The Managing Director of the SWP assured the councillors that the crews should return the containers carefully and that was monitored and resolved if there were any problems with the crew not replacing them appropriately.

- Councillors were impressed with the feedback from the Mendip area, who had just gone through the rollout of Recycle More and the use of different measures for communicating the changes to residents.
- Councillors thought that it was an interesting and exciting report and were pleased to see the encouraging figures and wanted to do as much as they could to help residents to recycle.
- Councillors thanked the SWP for all their hard work.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Approved the draft Business Plan 2021-2026 and draft budget 2021-22 and provide feedback to the Board (see Appendix A).
- 2.2 Noted the changes to how garden waste payments would be made in 2021, as previously agreed by the Somerset Waste Board.
- 2.3 Approved the renewal of the delegation of powers to Somerset Waste Partnership subject to confirmation from the Director of External Operations and Climate Change in association with other Officers that SWP's Advice, Support & Enforcement Policy to be provided in due course was compliant with the constitution and legislation to delegate such power. The Director should have such authorisation to approve this delegation.

88. **Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- Councillors thanked the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development for his introduction to the report.
- Councillors requested more timescales for when the projects would be started/finished and further information on the implementation.
The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development explained that there were timescales mentioned within the report, however, some were concept projects that were dependable on the funding received for them and that Somerset West and Taunton would have a phased delivery plan in place.
- Councillors stated that the report showed some amazing forward thinking for the area.

- Councillors were pleased to see that young people had been involved and that there was work to support them within the projects.
- Councillors queried how officers would deliver the loan fund as mentioned in section 5.9 of the report.

The Chief Executive advised that the five councils had adopted the document which would allow them to have collective conversations with Government and other agencies especially after the changes that the Public Works Loan Board had made at the end of 2020.

- Councillors agreed that it was a good document to look at funding, especially post the Covid Pandemic.
- Councillors were disappointed that they had not had information on the Wellington Enterprise Centre prior to the report being published.
The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development advised that the project had moved on very quickly and that some Wellington Town Councillors had been involved. He advised that he would ensure that the information was shared but that it was still in the early stages of development.
- Councillors agreed that it was a brilliant document that pulled together all the projects in Somerset and were keen to speak in one voice on the economy across Somerset.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 The Executive was asked to note and endorse the Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan and the collective approach being taken in partnership by the Somerset local authorities to create a coherent pipeline of projects to support economic growth in the county and in Somerset West and Taunton over the long term.

(The Meeting ended at 7.45 pm)